



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Free export seminars will help small businesses launch overseas sales

Food businesses must sign up by Feb. 17 for export consulting, buyer introductions

OLYMPIA – Small businesses interested in exporting food and agricultural products won't want to miss the opportunity to get some quality free advice on taking their products overseas. And because the export training is followed with introductions to foreign buyers ready to purchase those very Washington products, participants may be exporting before they know it.

"The low exchange rate makes our prices very competitive internationally and the quality of our foods is second to none," said Cameron Crump, an international trade specialist with WSDA's International Marketing Program. "Sometimes all a small firm needs to be successful is a savvy business plan and the right introductions. We're here to help with both."

Qualified businesses will participate in market advising clinics in April, featuring one-on-one consulting from a representative from Japan, Taiwan, Mexico or China. The 90-minute sessions will be held in the Tri-Cities, Yakima and Seattle.

Based on the export marketing plan developed in the consulting session, WSDA will then work to organize in-bound foreign missions of buyers seeking new business partners here in Washington. In August, the foreign buyers will visit participating Washington firms, sample their products and explore new business partnerships.

Interested businesses must act quickly to take advantage of the free consulting. Advance sign-up is required to ensure that the Washington firms are matched with an export consultant who will provide the most relevant strategic advice. Small businesses must apply for assistance by Feb. 17 by contacting Cameron Crump at ccrump@agr.wa.gov or 360-902-1940.

Food exports continue to grow dramatically, with more than \$8 billion in sales of Washington-origin foods reaching foreign markets in 2011. Under Gov. Chris Gregoire's Washington Export Initiative, WSDA is seeking to assist an additional 1,000 firms and create \$300 million in new export sales by 2015.

WSDA's [International Marketing Program](#), with staff based across the state and in Asia, is a valuable resource for local producers and processors as they seek to establish new overseas business relationships. Last year, WSDA assisted over 200 firms make international sales of more than \$94 million.

The consulting and buyer introductions are funded by a federal grant from the State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) program developed by the U.S. Small Business Administration. WSDA's International

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Marketing Program is working in close coordination with the Washington Department of Commerce to implement the grant.

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